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Assistant Director, OO

20 May 1948

Chief, Foreign Documents Branch, OO

Foreign Documents Branch Screening Team to Europe

Reference: Administrative Instruction 60-2, 2 March 1948

1. The intelligence information reports compiled and published by the Foreign Documents Branch of OO are the product of research and translation on the basis of foreign language written material. Since there is almost no information on Russia and her Satellites available in this country in the English language, it follows that the necessary data, both basic and current, must be obtained from foreign language sources. The most fruitful and comprehensive of these are naturally those that were produced by the antagonists of Russia in the late war:--Germany and Japan, together with that Russian material, past and present, which can be procured. The German Documents contain a mass of detailed information which was built up through the work of special organizations over a period of years in both peace and war on not only pre-war Russia, but also on the territory recently annexed by her or brought under her control and must, for purposes of considering Russia's war potential, be given equally serious and detailed consideration. For example; there are approximately 500 tons of documents held in Berlin of which only about 15 tons are now ear-marked for removal. Many hundreds of tons of documents are held by War Crimes, Military Government, Intelligence Agencies and various other projects. The partial exploitation of these has always been for a single purpose. They have never been completely exploited and still contain much of real value.

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An exceedingly large amount of basic industrial, transportation, economic, geodetic, meteorological, mineral and many other categories of muchly needed data has been extracted from the German documents already received and exploited.

2. Many reports of large holdings of documents in Europe have been frequently received for the past year. However, the multiform documents received at the German Military Document Center in the Pentagon and screened by this branch indicate two facts; first, that documents are being returned to the US without due regard to their value, many being very low grade in character; and secondly, that many valuable documents are still present in the European Theater.

3. It has been apparent for a period of many months that some aggressive and definite action should be taken in connection with the documents in foreign languages that are now reposing in Europe. The problem presented was chiefly due to the great number of documents in Europe, their wide dispersal and the large number of agencies claiming ownership or custodianship. It can be safely assumed that the greater mass of the documents would fall into a few general classifications:

- A. Those which are of basic intelligence value to some agency of the United States Government.
- B. Those which are of immediate current value to the occupying forces so long as the occupation may last.
- C. Those whose possession by an enemy power would be detrimental to the United States.
- D. Those whose possession by an enemy power might result in undue hardship to the citizens of the occupied countries.

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- E. Those which should be retained for later transfer to a permanent German civil government.
- F. Those of a cultural, educational or historic value which should be immediately returned to private German interests or institutions

4. Since all the documents in European Theater are, by order, the property of the Theater Commander, preliminary conversations were held with the Documents Office of the Intelligence Division, Department of the Army, in regard to the matter of determining final disposition of the above records. Several months ago it was thought probable that a number of organizations, among them War Crimes, for example, would suddenly discover during the summer of 1948 that they had no further use for the majority of the foreign language documents then in their possession. Informal conversations inaugurated with ID developed the need to determine a method of sorting out the valuable documents from among the great mass of material and of determining the order of precedence for their return to the United States. Before these conversations had lead to a concrete proposal the recent periods of international emergency arose in Berlin with threats of drastic action at other points. These conditions caused the subject to be speedily reopened and a concrete proposal made. Lt. Colonel Ligon, ID, Department of the Army, ascertained that the Navy and the Air Force have no further interest in the documents in the European Theater. The State Department, the Department of the Army and CIA each have a considerable interest in these documents. State Department and the Department of the Army have signified their willingness to have the Foreign Documents Branch

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Screening Group represent them in all matters in connection with the selection and the return of documents to the United States. The reason for this is that the two departments know that the Foreign Documents Branch will be the organization which will exploit the selected documents for them and that as IAC members, they will receive the end products of all exploitation or translation done within CIA. The two departments also admit that the Foreign Documents Branch is much better qualified than they are for this proposed task in the following respects:

- A. FDB by reason of its long experience working with and its constant survey of, all foreign language material coming into Washington, is in much the best position to judge what material is needed to fill IAC requirements and which material would be merely duplication of that already worked over by intelligence agencies than would representatives of theirs who are specialists in one field only.
- B. That due to personnel losses in the German Document Section of the War Department and in the Research Section of the State Department neither of them have qualified screening personnel.

Both State and Army will attach representative personnel to the screening group from among their people now stationed in Germany.

5. It is, therefore, recommended that a project be approved for the sending of a small selected screening team composed of members of the FDB/00 of CIA to the European Theater to make final disposition

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of all foreign language documents held there that might be of interest to any government agency.

6. The personnel proposed for this screening group and the reasons for their nomination are as follows:

(1)

[REDACTED]

It is felt that [REDACTED] due to his long service in

the intelligence field and to his present assignment as Chief of the Foreign Documents Branch would be best qualified to make the many on-the-spot decisions which will have to be made in the matter of determining the disposition of the millions of documents that will be processed. Some of the decisions will have to be made for and against various divisions and sub-divisions of the Government and it is, therefore, felt that an officer of some age and experience could handle these matters with more tact and diplomacy and with the least aftermath of rancor than could a more inexperienced man. [REDACTED] has only recently returned

from [REDACTED] most of it in the intelligence service, and is personally acquainted with General Clay and General Hayes and Colonel Rhodes of the headquarters in Berlin and General Huebner and General White and Colonel Hill of the headquarters in Frankfurt and with General Walsh and Colonel Schow, G-2 and Deputy G-2 of the Theater. It is with these officers that all final arrangements will need to be made. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reads German he could also assist in the screening of German documents.

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(2)

[redacted] discharged from the Army as a captain. He is at present assigned to the Source Survey Division of FDB. He is an expert German linguist and translator. For several years prior to his discharge from the Army he was on duty in the German Military Documents Section of the War Department. [redacted]

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[redacted] In the course of his duties with GMDS he learned of the nature of most of the German language documents being returned to this country and also the repositories for many of those remaining in Europe. He is in fact better qualified in the field of German military documents than anyone now on duty with War Department and it is for this reason that the War Department is more than satisfied to have the team of which he is a member make all the decisions and arrangements effecting their interest in the documents now in Europe.

(3) A third person yet to be nominated to be selected for his ability to read both Russian and German. While the vast majority of documents will be found to be in German it is hoped there will be some of them of value located that are in Russian or other Slavic languages. It is for this reason that it was thought important to have one member of the party competent in these languages.

7. Attached are copies of four radiograms that have been received in Washington in regard to the urgency of making final decisions reference documents in the European Theater. These cables set forth very

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clearly the need for the project and the reasons for its urgency. Also attached is one newspaper clipping quoting Brigadier General Telford Taylor in re the closing down in August of the International War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg, Germany.

8. (a) The maximum estimated time for the completion of the project is sixty days in the European Theater.

(b) The urgency of the project is great and immediate as indicated by the attached exhibits which state many documents will very shortly be destroyed or otherwise lost unless a desire for them is immediately made known.

9. No additional personnel for the project is required.

10. Vouchered funds are recommended as the project is unclassified.

11. (a) Total maximum estimated cost per person for the maximum estimated stay of sixty days for all travel to and from Europe and per diem while there, one thousand three hundred dollars (\$1,300.00).

(b) The maximum total cost would thus not exceed \$4,000.00.

This total could be considerably reduced by using U S Army Transport Service in lieu of commercial air transport. It must be borne in mind that there are of FDB who are translating German documents every day in answer to approved requirements. A great quantity of material is available but the quality is poor. Much badly needed time is consumed in screening out the worthwhile information from the tons of useless documents now being received. To keep the translators supplied with high-grade intelligence material of value to the IAC agencies and to CIA for a period of the next two years is most important as by the end of that period its worth will

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be questionable and we will be on a strictly current basis. The information contained in the documents in Europe decreases in value directly with the passage of time. If the important documents are located at once and their return expedited, the intelligence information extracted may be of great value at this time, while if the contrary is allowed to happen, and the important documents are destroyed or returned after a further great lapse of time the information contained in them will be of little or no value.



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